[Shri P. Chidambaram]

the issue about the flash floods in Himachal Pradesh. We send our deepest condolences and sympathies to the bereaved families, to those who have lost property and to those who have suffered. We stand by the Himachal Pradesh Government in its efforts to provide relief. I would request my colleague, the Minister for Agriculture under whom the subject natural calamity falls to immediately depute a team to Himachal Pradesh, as soon as the Himachal Pradesh Government is able to indicate to us either today or tomorrow, then they are ready to receive a team. Secondly, I will also convey to the Prime Minister the request of the hon. Members that immediate relief be granted and I am sure that by tomorrow, the Prime Minister will be able to announce immediate relief to Himachal Pradesh.

14.41½ hrs.

BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Sixteenth Report

[English]

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA) : I beg to present the Sixteenth Report of the Business Advisory Committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Let us move to next item. We will take up statements under Rule 377.

14.42 hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

(i) Need to ensure benefit of LPG Agency/ Petrol dealership provided under reserved quota.

[Translation]

SHRI VIDYASAGAR SONKER (Saidpur) : Sir, the Department of Petroleum invites applications for allotment of LPG Agency and petrol dealership under reserved quota. But after interviewing applicants, inordinate delay is caused by the Department in allotting LPG Agency/Petrol dealership under reserved quota for Scheduled Castes. Even after allotment of the quota the Department makes the allottees run from pillar to post on the pretext of non-availability of land. While in the advertisement inviting the application it is clearly mentioned that the entire arrangement for the agency and dealership will be made by the company itself and the whole money invested therein will be realised by the company from the dealers in instalments, which, however, is not being done in actual practice.

Sometimes, agency or dealership is even allotted in favour of some other persons due to which the persons belonging to Scheduled Castes do not get any direct benefit of the reserved quota.

Therefore, the hon. Minister is urged upon to take suitable action in this regard, so that Scheduled Castes and other reserved categories may be really benefited from the quota meant for them.

(ii) Need to provide adequate funds to State Government of Uttar Pradesh for industrial development of Ferozabad.

SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA (Ferozabad) : Sir, I would like to draw your kind attention towards my constituency, Ferozabad. Tehsil Kharagarh, Fatehabad and Bah, near Agra, have a population of about 20 lakh. Industrially this area is deprived of every development scheme. The entire area has been dacoit infested. This area lies between Chambal and Yamuna. Unemployment, starvation and deprivation are rampant in the area. The educated unemployed youth are forced to become dacoits due to non-availability of employment opportunities. We are celebrating 50th anniversary of our independence but it is misfortune of the people that potable water is still a far cry there due to which the people have to drink dirty water from taps and ponds. This causes infectious and fatal diseases among them.

Therefore, through you, I urge upon the Union Government that the above area of my constituency may be declared backward so that both the Union Government as well as UP Government may together carry out development works in these areas and a big industry may be set up there with a view to check the growing unemployment.

(iii) Need to provide financial assistance to State Government of Madhya Pradesh for providing relief to the people affected by earthquake particularly in Jabalpur region.

SHRI DADA BABURAO PARANJPE (Jabalpur) : In Jabalpur division of Madhya Pradesh a fierce earthquake was experienced at 4.22 a.m. on 22.5.1997. Since then, i.e. within two months thereafter, as many as 20 tremors of earthquakes have been experienced there causing 38 deaths according to the Madhya Pradesh Government while non-governmental figure shows more than 50 deaths. The earthquake experienced at Latur district of Maharashtra three and half years ago caused more than 10 thousand deaths as per the Government figures. The intensity of the earthquakes experienced in